

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5506

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 6002

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK

SUBJECT: INDO-PAKISTAN RELATIONS

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 4065 B. NEW DELHI 5730

1. POL COUNSELOR MET WITH MEA JOINT SECY (PAKISTAN), I.P. SINGH, APRIL 23, AND REVIEWED CLIMATE OF INDO-PAK RELATIONS IN AFTERMATH OF MRS. GANDHI'S LETTER TO BHUTTO AND BHUTTO'S RESPONSE (SINGH SAID GOI HAD NOW RECEIVED).

2. SINGH DISCOUNTED CAUTION AND QUERULOUS FLAVOR OF G.K. REDDY COMMENTS (REF B) ON INDIAN EXPECTATIONS FOR FOREIGN SECRETARY LEVEL MEETINGS WHICH BOTH SIDES HAVE NOW AGREED UPON IN PRINCIPLE. SINGH SAID THAT INDIANS OF COURSE WOULD LIKE TO SEE MORE CONTENT AND MORE ACTIVE DEVELOPMENT IN TRADE, CULTURAL EXCHANGES, AND VISA ISSUANCES, BUT IS LOOKING PRIMARILY TOWARD RESOLUTION OF CIVIL AIR ISSUE AND REOPENING OF RAIL AND ROAD LINKS BEFORE GETTING TO DISCUSSION OF
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DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS. GOI HAD NO INTENTION OF HOLDING OUT

FOR COMPLETION OF MARITIME BOUNDARY DISCUSSIONS (WHICH WOULD BE TECHNICAL AND ON WHICH SINGH ENVISAGED RELATIVELY LITTLE TROUBLE), MORE PAKISTAN PURCHASES FROM INDIA, DISCUSSIONS ON BORDER DEMILITARIZATION, OR EVEN AGREEMENT ON TRANSIT TRADE WITH AFGHANISTAN BEFORE NEGOTIATING ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

3. SINGH INSISTED THAT THE KEY ELEMENT CHANGING THE SITUATION FROM THAT BEFORE MID-MARCH WAS BHUTTO FORMAL EXPRESSION OF WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW CIVIL AIR CASE FROM ICAO. MAIN PROBLEMS ON CIVIL AVIATION WOULD NOW BE TECHNICAL; IF BOTH SIDES COULD GET BACK TO LEVEL OF FLIGHTS AS OF 1965, SINGH SAID, THAT WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. PRECISE MATTER OF FREQUENCIES AND SERVICE, HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE DISCUSSED AT TECHNICAL LEVELS.

4. SINGH ACKNOWLEDGED THAT GOP HAD COMPLETED RAIL LINK TO THE WAGAH BORDER AND SAID IT WOULD TAKE LITTLE TIME FOR INDIA TO DO THE SAME IF TECHNICAL AGREEMENT ON NUMBER OF WAGONS, TYPES OF CARGO, CHARGES, ETC., COULD BE WORKED OUT. HE EXPRESSED CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN TRANSIT TRADE TO IRAN (TO WHICH WE UNDERSTAND GOP HAS ALREADY INDICATED IT IS AGREEABLE).

5. ON SUBJECT OF SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS, SINGH SAID HE THOUGHT THAT GOP WOULD ON BALANCE TAKE A POSITIVE VIEW; INITIALLY GOP MIGHT BE CONCERNED THAT THEIR LINKS WITH PRC MIGHT SUFFER, BUT AFTER ALL "RELIANCE" ON PRC HAD NOT REALLY GOTTEN PAKISTAN ANYTHING VIS-A-VIS INDIA, AND PEACE ON ONE SIDE OF THE SUBCONTINENT SHOULD ENCOURAGE PEACE ON OTHER FRONTIERS AS WELL.

6. COMMENT: ALL SWEETNESS AND LIGHT. SINGH DID NOT REFER TO

THE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT WHICH HIS PREDECESSOR, ASHOK CHIB, HAD MADE TO POLCOUNSELOR IN MARCH THAT BANGLADESH WAS KEY ELEMENT IN GOI FOOT-DRAGGING ON CIVIL AVIATION TALKS, AND WE COULD NOT BRING OURSELVES TO CALL SUCH UNPLEASANT TOPICS TO SINGH'S ATTENTION ON THIS INITIAL CALL. IF THE INDIANS KEEP UP THEIR PRESENT APPROACH, AND PAKS KEEP UP THEIRS (REF A),
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THINGS MAY INDEED LOOK BRIGHTER FOR AT LEAST WESTERN SUB-CONTINENTAL RELATIONS. IF.
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